

Explaining similarities between main clauses and nominalized phrases

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In many languages of South America, there is substantial morphosyntactic parallelism between nominalized clauses and main clauses. In particular, it is often the case that a single series of person-markers occurs on inalienable nouns to indicate the possessor; this same series of person-markers also occurs on both nominalized and main clause verbs to indicate one of the core arguments of the verb. Constituency often parallels these morphological markers, with the possessors of nouns and nominalized verbs forming the same type of constituent with their heads as the parallel core argument forms with the main verb. This paper considers such parallelism in two language families and one genetically isolated language of Amazonia.

Having established the existence of the pattern, we next ask why such parallelism should exist and why it should be so common. The short answer is that the patterns share a common origin, in which (i) nominalizations serve as complements of abstract matrix clause verbs, then (ii) these biclausal constructions are reanalyzed as monoclausal main clause predicates, in which the erstwhile nominalized verb is now the semantic and syntactic

head of the clause, and the erstwhile complement-taking verb disappears or is reduced to the status of auxiliary. The parallelism is so common because such complex constructions are the universal source of innovative tense-aspect-modality distinctions, in languages where nominalizations provide the primary subordination strategy, these innovative TAM constructions will contain the morphosyntax of nominalizations, inherited from the biclausal source.

As a part of the process of becoming conventionalized into new main clause grammar, the biclausal source constructions become monoclausal, with the former main verb losing its independent argument structure (becoming first an auxiliary and later an inflectional morpheme), and the former nominalized verb becoming the new main verb. As a consequence of this reanalysis, the marking of the core arguments of the former nominalization gains a new status: the possessor marking is reanalyzed as marking a core argument (attested examples include GENITIVE > NOMINATIVE, ACCUSATIVE, ABSOLUTIVE, or ERGATIVE, depending on the source construction), and oblique adjuncts become case-marked core arguments (attested examples include DATIVE, INSTRUMENTAL and other peripheral postpositions > ERGATIVE or ACCUSATIVE).

These patterns are found in other parts of the world as well, especially in North America and the Tibeto-Burman family of central and southeast Asia, both places where nominalization is the primary strategy for subordination. This paper will review studies of two language families and one genetically isolated language of South America where this pattern is clear, summarizing for each case the arguments that nominalized clauses were the source of the parallel grammatical patterns in innovative main clauses. Then we will return to the question of explanation and the best synchronic analysis of such parallel patterns.

1. The Cariban language family

The Cariban language family consists of some 25 languages spoken in northern South America in Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia and the three Guianas. In earlier work (Gildea 1992, 1993a-b, 1998, in press), I have demonstrated that in many languages in the Cariban family, certain main

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clause constructions present the morphosyntax of nominalizations. These are a result of reanalysis of nominalizations (originally as the predicate of predicate nominal clauses, some with copulas) into new main clause tense-aspect distinctions. Here I will present a brief synopsis of the more detailed reconstructions available in Gildea (1998). The argument goes as follows: First, the morphosyntax of possession is generally quite consistent across the family and readily reconstructs (chapter 6). Second, using exactly the same morphosyntax, the notional absolutive argument possesses a nominalized verb; this pattern, too, is consistent across the family and readily reconstructs (chapter 7). Third, a subset of main clauses in a subset of modern Cariban languages presents exactly the morphosyntax expected of nominalizations, including a verb bearing reflexes of Proto-Cariban nominalizing morphology (chapters 9-10). The remainder of this section extracts illustrative examples of these three phenomena, and presents reconstructions of each.

First, with regard to nominal morphosyntax, a nominal possessor always precedes the possessed item, forming a very tight syntactic unit. The possessor is not marked, but the possessed often bears a suffix indicating its possessed status. Person of the possessor may also be indicated by means of a prefix on the possessed noun, and collective number of the possessor is indicated by an enclitic to the possessed noun. All these patterns are illustrated in (1) using the Katxuyana noun **onu** 'eye'.

(1) Katxuyana **onu** 'eye'

∅-j-onu-ru	my eye		
o-onu-ru	your eye	o-onu-r=kumu	your (pl) eyes
∅-enu-ru	his/her eye	∅-enu-r=kumu	their eyes
k-onu-ru	our (dual incl) eye	k-onu-r=kumu	our (pl incl) eyes
t-onu-ru	his/her own eye	t-onu-r=kumu	their own eyes
m□re j-onu-ru	the child's eye		

All three of these patterns reconstruct to Proto-Cariban. Table 1 presents the most recent reconstruction of the prefixes (from Meira, Gildea & Hoff [in press](#)) and the collective enclitics (from Gildea [in press](#)).

Prefixes/Proclitics	Collective Suffixes/Enclitics
1 *u-j-	
2 *ô-j-	Proto-Cariban *komo
3 *k-	Pemóng Group *-’nogoŋ
1+2 *i-/ø-	
(3R) *t-	

Table 1. Reconstructed possessive/absolute person and number markers

The morphosyntax of nominalizations is exactly that of nouns: the verb takes one of several nominalizing suffixes, which vary for semantic value (action versus participant, nonpast versus past, in some languages versus future as well), after which it is an obligatorily possessed lexical noun. The general pattern is for the notional absolute to possess the derived noun, whereas the notional ergative, if it occurs explicitly, is within a postpositional phrase headed by a reflex of *wiya (all northern Cariban languages) or *pôkô (Kuikúro & Kalapalo). As a possessor, the absolute may be indicated by a free noun in a tight constituent with the nominalized verb or alternatively, person and number of the absolute may be marked by the possessive personal prefix and collective enclitic.

All these patterns are illustrated in (2) using Kari’nja examples from Hoff (1968). In (2a), the intransitive verb **wotixto** 'descend' bears the past-perfect action nominalizing suffix **-xpo**; it is possessed by the preceding noun, **pandi:ra** 'flag', which is the notional absolute of 'descend'. The entire nominalized clause is the subject of the locative phrase **ipookoro** 'following it'. In (2b), the transitive verb **eta** 'hear' bears the same suffix and is possessed by its notional absolute, the preceding noun **ayaura** 'your words'; the first person notional A of 'hear' is expressed via the personal prefix **ï-** '1' on the dative postposition **'wa**. The possessed noun is the object of the instrumental postposition **ke**, yielding the adverbial reading 'because'.

(2) Kari’nja (Carib of Suriname) nominalizations embedded in postpositional phrases

- a. [POSSR/Abs V-NZR]
 a. [pandiira wotixto-xpo] ipookoro
 flag descend-PFCT.NMLZR following:it

It has been followed by *the lowering of the flag*. (Hoff 1968: 139)

(lit: *The flag's [PERFECTIVE] lowering followed it.*)

[POSSR/ABSV-NZR]POSP]_{pp} [A/OBL]
 b. [ay-aura eta-xpo] ke [i-'wa] eero s- ukuu-sa
 2-words hear-PFCT.NMLZR INST 1-DAT this 1A-know-TAM
 Because *your words have been heard by me*, I know this. (Hoff 1968: 121)
 (lit. With the [PERFECTIVE] hearing of your words by me, I know this.)

The set of nominalizations that condition this morphosyntax is not yet fully described across the family, but several clear candidates for reconstruction are given in Table 2.

*-ri	Nonpast Action Nominalizer
*-tipi-ri	Past-Perfect Action Nominalizer
*-sapo	Resultative S/O Nominalizer
*-ne	A Nominalizer
*-topo	Circumstantial Nominalizer (time, place, instrument)

Table 2. Some important nominalizers that reconstruct to Proto-Cariban

These same patterns occur in main clauses in several languages: the verbs are inflected with tense-aspect suffixes that are or contain modern reflexes of the nominalizers in Table 2, sometimes accompanied by auxiliaries. This is illustrated in (3) via the past tense in Akawaio (from Fox 2003). The suffix **-'pi** 'Past' is a reflex of ***-tipi-ri**, the absolutive prefix is a reflex of the possessive prefixes, and the collective absolutive enclitic is a reflex of the collective possessor enclitic.

- (3) a. a-dö-bödi-'pi=gong b. a-wönö-'pi-i-ya='nogong
 2-go-ITER-PAST=PL.ABS 2-hit-PAST-3-ERG=COLLECTIVE
 You-all used to go. He hit you-all.

Parallel patterns are attested in three other tense-aspects in Akawaio, and in various other tense-aspects in another 6 languages, as indicated in Table 3.

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<i>Clause Type</i>	<i>FUNCTION</i>	<i>Languages that present the distinction</i>					
Nominalization	SUBORDINATION	all except Bakairi and Ikpéng					
<i>Main (<Nzn)</i>	FUTURE	Akawaio			Kari'ña	Kuikuro	Kalapalo
	NONPAST IMPERFECTIVE	Akawaio	Makushi	Pemón		Kuikuro	Kalapalo
	PERFECT	Akawaio	Makushi	Pemón	Panare		
	PAST PERFECTIVE	Akawaio	Makushi	Pemón	Panare	Kuikuro	Kalapalo

Table 3. The tense-aspect-mood distinctions coded by ergative main clauses in the Cariban family

This set of parallels is the problem in need of solution: why (or how) does the same morphology and syntax indicate the argument structure of a possessive phrase, a nominalized phrase, and a subset of main clauses? In the next two sections, we will see that variants of this problem are found in the Jê language family and in the isolate Trumai.

2. The Jê language family

The Jê language family consists of 8-9 languages spoken in central Brazil (Rodrigues 1999). While there is still no comprehensive grammar of any Jê language, a number of recent MA and Ph.D theses (e.g. Santos 1997, Reis Silva 2001, Castro Alves 2004, Oliveira 2005, Salanova 2007) make substantial contributions to description of individual languages, and some initial historical work has begun on the morphosyntax of four northern Jê languages: Timbira, Apinajé, Kayapó and Suyá (Castro Alves 2004, 2007; Ribeiro 2004 discusses Suyá and Apinajé). Drawing on Castro Alves' comparative work, we can see essentially the same three patterns in northern Jê that we saw in Cariban: First, the morphosyntax of possession is generally quite consistent across the family and readily reconstructs. Second, identical (cognate) morphosyntax indicates the relation between a nonfinite (nominalized) verb and its notional absolutive argument. Third, a subset of main clauses in each of these four languages presents exactly the morphosyntax expected of nominalizations, including being headed by a

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verb in the nonfinite form¹. The remainder of this section presents the briefest of illustrative examples of these three phenomena and asserts that they are parallel to the Cariban family in historical terms as well.

Beginning with nominal morphosyntax, in possession constructions in Jê, the possessor always precedes the possessed, forming a tight constituent. When the possessor is not a free noun, it is marked as a prefix on the possessed noun. I illustrate with examples from Apãniekrá Timbira (Castro Alves 2004: 47).

- (4) **ĩp krã maria rosa tō a-j-arkwa i-□-ũkwa iŕ-patʃi**
 dog head Maria Rosa brother 2-RP-mouth 1-RP-house 3-bracelet
 dog's head Maria Rosa's brother your mouth my house his/her bracelet

The morphosyntax of nominalizations is precisely parallel, as illustrated with complement clauses from Apinajé (5-7, taken from Oliveira 2005:278). The complement verb generally appears in a distinct form that has been called, among other things, 'nonfinite' (Oliveira, Castro Alves), 'nominal' (Salanova), and the 'long form' (Santos); regardless of synchronic analysis, it seems clear that, at least etymologically, this form represents a deverbal noun, or nominalization. The absolutive precedes this nominal form of the verb, either as full NP (6) or as possessive prefix (5, 7). The A does not occur in the complement clause when it is coreferential with the main clause A (6); when it is a separate participant, it is realized as a postpositional agent phrase (glossed 'ERG' in 7)².

- (5) **i-□-mã [i-ĩprer] p-uba**
 1-DAT 1-RP-irritable RP-fear
 I'm afraid of becoming violent [e.g., due to alcohol].
- (6) **i-□-mã [kuke□ krêr] p-uba**
 1-DAT cotia eat.NF RP-fear
 I'm afraid of eating cotia meat [and getting sick].
- (7) **i-□-mã [me karō k̃t i-□-irō ja] p-uba**
 1-DAT INDF soul 3.ERG 1-RP-watch DEF.ART RP-fear
 I'm afraid that spirits might spook me.

¹ These same points are made (although different conclusions are drawn from them) in Salanova's contribution to this volume.

² Oliveira (2005: 268-272) demonstrates that the [main clause](#) dative A in (5-7) has the syntactic properties of a core argument, the subject. It is unclear whether or not the ergative A in [the complement clause in](#) (7) is syntactically core.

Castro Alves (2004, [in press](#)) compiles examples that show parallel subordinate clause morphosyntax in Timbira, Kayapó, and Suyá.

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The same morphosyntax (including the nominalized/nonfinite form of the main verb) is found in main clauses in a few tense-aspects, as listed in Table 3 (adapted from Castro Alves [in press](#), supplemented by Salanova 2007). I postpone discussion of disputes in synchronic analysis until section 4.

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<i>Clause Type</i>	<i>FUNCTION</i>	<i>Languages that present the distinction</i>			
Nominalization	SUBORDINATION				
Main (< Nzn)	FUTURE				Suyá
	NEGATIVE	Timbira	Apinajé	Kayapó	Suyá
	IMPERFECTIVE	Timbira	Apinajé	Kayapó	Suyá
	PERFECT/PERFECTIVE	Timbira		Kayapó	Suyá

Table 4. Some tense-aspect-polarity distinctions coded by ergative clauses in the Jê family

3. Trumai (isolate)

Trumai is a genetic isolate language spoken in the Xingu Reserve in Central Brazil. Since Trumai is an isolating language with almost no bound morphology, parallels between nominal possession, argument structure of nominalizations, and argument structure of main clauses comes from more abstract isomorphism between the morphosyntax of inalienable possession and absolutive marking in both nominalized complement clauses and main clauses. I briefly illustrate these patterns here.

Like in Cariban and Jê, the possessor precedes the possessed, forming a tight syntactic unit. Unlike Cariban and Jê, there are no possessive prefixes. Two subcategories of nouns are obligatorily possessed, and for one of these, if a possessor NP does not precede the noun then an anaphoric third person possessor must be referenced via a

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pronominal enclitic (8a-d). This clitic takes various allomorphs depending on whether it is preceded by the NP-final morpheme **yi** (8b, 8d)³ and/or whether it is followed by the dative suffix **-tl** (8c-d).

- (8) a. **xop-ake** b. **xop yi-ake** c. **xop-ae-tl** d. **xop y -a-tl**
 mouth-3 mouth YI-3 mouth-3-DAT mouth YI-3-DAT
 his/her mouth his/her mouth (to) his/her mouth (to) his/her mouth

Another morphosyntactic property of obligatory possession can be seen in examples (9a-b). In both examples, the obligatorily possessed absolutive argument precedes the verb; in (9a) the possessor, **maka**, of the inalienably possessed noun **mut** 'shirt', is explicit, whereas in (9b) the noun **mut** occurs with no explicit possessor. We would expect **mut** to bear the third person possessive enclitic illustrated in (8b-d), but instead we see the possessor indicated by the third person absolutive enclitic on the main verb. In other words, the possessor is "raised" to become the absolutive of the predicate, leaving the possessed noun alone in the preverbal absolutive position.

- (9) a. ERG [POSSR POSSD]_{ABS} ERG [ABS] V-POSSR
hai-ts ka_in [Maka mut] tuxa'tsi b. **hai-ts ka_in [mut] tuxa'tsi-n**
 1-ERG FOC/TNS Maka shirt pull 1-ERG FOC/TNS shirt pull-3
 I pulled *Maka's* shirt. I pulled *his* shirt.

Turning to the behavior of nominalizations, the absolutive argument in complement clauses in Trumai appears to behave like an inalienable possessor, immediately preceding its head, the verb, and when anaphoric being treated morphosyntactically just like an inalienable possessor. This behavior suggests that the unmarked verb in Trumai may be interpreted as a nominalized form possessed by its notional absolutive argument. In dative complement clauses (10a-c), the complement clause verb bears the dative suffix and an anaphoric third person absolutive is marked by placing the possessive enclitic after the (nominalized) verb, preceding the dative suffix. Note that the pre-dative allomorphs of these clitics are identical to those seen in (8c-d), and that they refer to complement clause S (10a-b) or O (10c).

³ Guirardello shows that **yi** must always be the final element in a NP, but otherwise cannot be given a straightforward analysis, and so glosses it simply as 'YI'. A similar analytical impasse is seen in (10c), where the morpheme **ke** is glossed simply as 'KE'. (cf. Guirardello 1999: 62-70 regarding **yi** and 178-193 regarding **ke**.)

- (10) a. **Yatamalu pudits ka_in** [V-ABS]-DAT
 Yatamalu like FOC/TNS work-3 -DAT
 Yatamalu likes (*her*) working.
- b. **ha huts'a chī_in** [V yi-ABS]-DAT
 I see FOC/TNS dance YI-3 -DAT
 I saw (*her*) dancing.
- c. **inatl yi chī_in waimi ke** [V-ABS-DAT [A]-ERG]
 she YI FOC/TNS tell KE kill-3-Dat child-COLLEC PL-ERG
 She told me *that the kids killed it*.
 (lit. She told me about *the killing of it by the kids*.)

Trumai also presents complement clauses that occur in the absolutive position in main clauses. These present a pattern of absolutive raising that is precisely parallel to the raising of the obligatory possessor seen in (9b). In (11a), the intransitive complement has an explicit S, **Sula yi**, whereas in 11b, the S is found only in the absolutive enclitic on the main verb. In (12a-b), the parallel facts are shown for the O argument.

- (11) a. A-Erg [S V]_o V
hai-ts [**Sula yi huma**] **padi**.
 1-ERG Sula YI bathe wait
 I waited for Sula to take a bath. (lit. I waited for Sula's bathing.)
- b. A-Erg [V]_o V-s
hai-ts [∅ **huma**] **padi-n**.
 1-ERG bathe wait-3ABS
 I waited for *her* to bathe. (lit. I waited for [*her* bathing].)
- (12) a. A-Erg [A-Erg O V]_o V
hai-ts **chī(in)** [**Kumaru-k Sula tīchī**] **padi**.
 1-ERG FOC/TENS Kumaru-ERG Sula scarify wait
 I waited for Kumaru to scarify Sula. (lit. [the scarring of Sula by Kumaru])
- b. A-Erg [A-Erg V]_o V-o
hai-ts **chī(in)** [**Kumaru-k ∅ tīchī**] **padi-n**.
 1-ERG FOC/TENS Kumaru-ERG scarify wait-3ABS
 I waited for Kumaru to scarify *her*. (lit. for *her* scarring by Kumaru.)

Of special note is that there is no morphological difference between the main clause verbs and the nominalized complement verbs. This leads to the observation that there are substantial parallels between main clause morphosyntax and these nominalized complement constructions, including the rigid absolutive-V verb phrase constituent and the case-marking (and apparent peripheral syntactic status) of the agent. Guirardello (1999: §5.1) argues persuasively that these parallels (and others) are consequences of the etymology of main clause grammar, which is reanalyzed from nominalized relative clauses in old cleft constructions.

4. Reanalysis: How a nominalized clause becomes a main clause

Universally, new main clause tense-aspect-mood distinctions come from complex constructions, often complement clause constructions (cf., among many others, Heine 1993, Bybee *et al* 1994, Harris and Campbell 1995, Givón 2001, Heine and Kuteva 2002, Hopper and Traugott 2004, Anderson 2006). The semantics of the matrix verb begin to shift from a concrete lexical meaning to a more abstract tense-aspect-mood meaning, e.g. 'want', 'owe', or 'go' > FUTURE, 'come' > PAST, etc. Semantics associated with the subordinate construction can similarly become conventionalized as the main clause TAM semantics, e.g., a locative predicate ('be at V-ing') > PROGRESSIVE (> IMPERFECTIVE > NONPAST); an agent nominalization > HABITUAL (> IMPERFECTIVE > NONPAST); a patient nominalization > RESULTATIVE (> PERFECTIVE > PAST). Along with the conventionalization of grammatical meaning, these biclausal constructions are reanalyzed by speakers as monoclausal constructions, in which the etymological matrix verb becomes an auxiliary, the etymological subordinate verb becomes a new (although generally inflectionally nonfinite) main verb, and the argument structure of the two etymological clauses is condensed into one, controlled solely by the new main verb. The alignment patterns of this new main clause construction may differ from that of other main clause constructions, and additional changes may also serve to distinguish the alignment patterns of these innovative main clauses from their subordinate (or biclausal) antecedents.

In some language families, especially common in the Americas, the primary (or the only) subordination strategy is nominalization: action

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nominalizations function as complement clauses, participant nominalizations function as relative clauses and either type in adpositional phrases function as adverbial clauses. As such, instead of participles, infinitives, or finite complement clauses, in these languages nominalizations serve as the input to the historical process of tense-aspect renewal. This allows the grammar of nominalizations to surface into main clauses, generally with an auxiliary, but sometimes not, especially in those languages that do not require a copula for all forms of nonverbal predication. Many details of this evolutionary process have been documented for the three cases illustrated here: for the Cariban family by Gildea (1998), for northern Jê languages by Castro Alves (2004, [to appear](#)), and for Trumai by Guirardello (1999).

In contrast to the multiple attested and reconstructed cases of nominalized forms becoming reanalyzed as main clause inflections, to my knowledge there has never been a single attested case or plausibly argued reconstruction for a change in the other direction (i.e. main clause inflection to nominalization). Similarly, the mechanism by which nominalizing morphology becomes inflectional morphology has been clearly explicated (reanalysis), as have the range of conditions in which such a reanalysis takes place: nominalizations functioning as complement clauses with a temporal, aspectual or modal main verb; as adverbial clauses, e.g., purpose becoming future; as relative clauses in cleft constructions becoming "focus" clauses; and even what appears to be spontaneous "insubordination" in pragmatically marked conditions (cf. Evans 2007). Again, the contrast with the alternative scenario is stark: no context has even been proposed by which main clause inflections could become reanalyzed as nominalizations. Thus, the data available to date support the strong claim that this sort of reanalysis is the sole source of isomorphism between the morphosyntax of main clause constructions and nominalized clauses. There are many cases of such isomorphism for which we have no solid historical work, and as such, there will be ample opportunity in future research to test this hypothesis.

Whether universal or merely a strong statistical tendency, the ubiquity of this evolutionary process raises questions about synchronic analysis and explanation. We know from multiple studies of diachronic syntax that subordinate inflections of verbs commonly become the semantic nuclei of

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main clauses by means of the reanalysis of biclausal source constructions. We also know that over time, the subordinate morphology does not just develop multiple meanings, but that each meaning may come to be associated with a distinct syntactic status. For example, English verbs in *-ing* serve as action nominalizations, gerunds/present participles and also as main clause progressive verbs; these distinctions are not wholly semantic, but they are also syntactic. We can safely infer that a subset of nominalized verb forms in each of the languages mentioned above in this paper are somewhere on the pathway to the status of main verbs in independent clauses – the question is when we can know that they have achieved this independent status. A more conservative position would insist that the main clause usages cannot yet be analyzed as independent from their source category, the nominalization. A more progressive position would look for evidence that the main clause usages are now analytically independent from their source.

In either case, the explanation for similarities is identical: the parallel between nominalizations and main clause grammar follows from their synchronic identity (they present the same patterns because they are the same thing) or their diachronic identity (they present the same patterns because they come from the same source). What is more interesting is to see how the competing analyses approach the *differences* between synchronic nominalizations and those synchronic main clause uses of erstwhile nominalizations. For the conservative analysis, differences are generally seen as insignificant, to be treated as exceptional idiosyncracies that do not really require independent explanation. For the progressive analysis, however, the differences are key, as they represent evidence for the *actualization* of a reanalysis.

Within studies of diachronic syntax, the term reanalysis is commonly used to refer to an invisible change in grammatical structure in the minds of speakers. After reanalysis, the identical surface string will have two different analyses for the speakers, one associated with the source construction and the other associated with the innovative construction. But because the surface strings are identical, the two cannot be readily distinguished by the linguist. Actualization is one or more subtle changes in phonology or morphosyntax that are associated with only the reanalyzed construction, changes such as alterations in case-marking, verb agreement, optionality of formerly

obligatory elements in the construction, or idiosyncratic phonological reduction of some elements in the construction. As Timberlake (1977: 151-2) explains, such changes arguably come about because once speakers change their conception of the construction, they are then able to introduce changes that would be consistent only with this new conceptualization. Such changes are useful analytical tools because they create differences between the source construction and the reanalyzed construction, which then allow us to argue that morphologically identical forms are no longer syntactically identical.

In the Cariban family, the sorts of actualization changes that have been attested are (i) that an obligatory copula with a predicate noun becomes an optional auxiliary with a reanalyzed main verb (Panare); (ii) the rigid order possessor-possessed becomes the more flexible order OV~VO (Panare); and (iii) individual person-markers in paradigms shift to new values exclusively in the reanalyzed constructions (e.g. in Apalaí and Katxúyana, where a verbal number marker has been introduced into only those nominalizations that have been reanalyzed; also in Panare and Makushi, where third person possessive prefixes on nouns are no longer identical to third person absolutive prefixes; also in Pemón and Makushi, where first and second person prefixes on the ergative postposition are no longer identical to prefixes on other postpositions). In Trumai, the main clause construction now presents an absolutive enclitic, **-n/-e**, that differs from the possessive > absolutive enclitic **-ake/-ae/-a** found in nominalized clauses. In Jê, Castro Alves (2004, [in press](#)) has identified a number of changes in case-marking that follow reanalysis, most significant being (i) the loss of the ergative case on A in innovative nonpast main clauses (Timbira) or when A is a full NP (future and negative in Suyá) and (ii) the extension of the ergative marker to some agentive S arguments in innovative past tense main clauses (Timbira) or in innovative future/negative clauses (Suyá). In most cases, the innovations are found only in the innovative construction, reflecting the speakers' reanalysis of the erstwhile nominalized forms as innovative main clause verbs.

In conclusion, this problem illustrates the value of an evolutionary perspective: the explanation for isomorphism between nominalizations and main clauses is that the former evolve into the latter. The explanation for the ubiquity of this isomorphism is that a major pathway for tense-aspect-mood

renewal in main clauses comes from the use of nominalizations as complements of semantically abstract matrix verbs or as nonverbal predicates (i.e., complements of copular or possession predicates). Early in this evolutionary process, at around the time of the initial reanalysis, there is a window of opportunity during which a single conservative analysis may be viable, unifying the subordinate usage of nominalizations with the nominalizations used as the primary nuclei of main clauses. But in most cases where the innovative main clause function occurs with high frequency, a little focused searching will be rewarded with grammatical or phonological evidence for reanalysis. Once reanalysis is established, the grammar of nominalizations can no longer be used to argue for the synchronic status of these main clause verbs as nominalized; this grammar is an archaism, indicating only the diachronic source of the modern grammar.

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Abbreviations:

1 ‘First person’; 2 ‘Second Person’; 3 ‘Third Person’; 3ABS ‘Third Person Absolute’; COLLEC ‘Collective’; DAT ‘Dative’; DEF.ART ‘Definite Article’; ERG ‘Ergative’; FOC/TNS ‘Focus/Tense’; INDF ‘Indefinite’; INST ‘Instrumental’; ITER ‘Iterative’; KE ‘unglossable morpheme *ke* (Trumai)’; NF ‘Non-Finite’; PFCT.NMLZR ‘Perfective Nominalizer’; PL ‘Plural’; PL.ABS ‘Plural.Absolute’; RP ‘Relational Prefix’; TAM ‘Tense-Aspect-Modality (precise value unspecified)’; YI ‘unglossable morpheme *yi* (Trumai)’

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